

**GEHLEN: Spy of the Century**  
by E. H. Cookridge  
Random House, 402 pp., \$10

**THE GENERAL WAS A SPY:**  
The Truth About General Gehlen  
and His Spy Ring  
by Heinz Höhne and Hermann Zölling  
translated from the German  
by Richard Barry  
Coward, McCann & Geoghegan,  
347 pp., \$10

**THE SERVICE:**  
The Memoirs of General  
Reinhard Gehlen  
translated from the German  
by David Irving  
World, 386 pp., \$10

**GEHLEN: Master Spy of the Century**  
by Charles Whiting  
Ballantine, 274 pp., \$1.25

*Reviewed by Robert G. Deindorfer*

In the perilous Cold War times of eighteen to twenty years ago, few persons privy to the ways of international circles—least of them Reinhard Gehlen himself—could have foreseen the twilight that was to fall over his later career. Gehlen's triumphs in the late 1940s and early 1950s, particularly his artful lifting of vital Soviet secrets, put him at the top of his profession. A slight, vain, driven man, methodical and single-minded, Gehlen was the remarkably reliable and productive leader of an espionage structure he hired out first to the United States and then to his own West German government. That was a world more clearly divided than now between friend and foe, and Gehlen seemed to some an epic figure, concealed behind the high, heavily patrolled walls of his headquarters at Pullach, a few miles from Munich. However, when the Cold War began to thaw, when his network was breached by the Communists, when new technology replaced people, Gehlen was brought down from his under-cover heights.

Son of a solid, middle-class Prussian family, Gehlen, like his father, went into the German army and slowly climbed up through the chain of command. If he was an unimpressive-looking little man, with thin lips, jugged ears, and a pale, cardboard complexion, he was also willing to work sixteen painstaking hours a day to fill in the daydream his vanity kept spinning. Gehlen, who was a general staff officer

during the Second World War, was named head of *Fremde Heere Ost* (Foreign Armies East), the German staff's intelligence unit on the Eastern Front. With a card file for a mind and a passion for detail, he soon formed a successful network of agents on both sides of the battle lines. His evaluations of Soviet strength were so accurate that they finally did him in. Toward the end of the war, as the Russian armies rolled westward, Hitler angrily relieved Gehlen of his command, not because his intelligence forecasts weren't accurate—they were—but because mournful estimates of overpowering Russian strength were too hard for the tormented, ever-optimistic Hitler to bear.

In the circumstances this created, Gehlen demonstrated a flair for the self-serving long view. Germany was doomed, no doubt of it. Beyond the defeat, though, he saw an increasing tension between the U.S.S.R. and its Western allies once the postwar house-keeping in Europe commenced. He advised his better agents in the denied area to stay where they were, packed up forty crates of microfilm intelligence on the Soviet Union, and scuttled into Bavaria to bury the treasure and await the advancing Americans, who seemed as the most promising market.

For a while, after Gehlen had given himself up, he was submerged in the great wash of prisoners of war. When his unique background came to the attention of U.S. military intelligence officers, however, he was flown to Washington. In a matter of months he made an agreement to pull together an American-funded, German-manned intelligence service, with the help of his voluminous files, his dormant agents and networks, and an intimate knowledge of the Russians.

Gehlen and his people got on to the job immediately, with an annual budget variously reported to be from \$6 million to \$20 million. With the collaboration of German soldiers still prisoners in the Soviet Union and a host of refugees streaming into Western Europe, not to mention some former *Abwehr* and SS officers, Gehlen built an enormous service just as the breach between the Soviet Union and the United States began to widen.

"The Org," as the Gehlen organization was known, developed right out of the craft books: agents, subagents and cutouts, dead drops, codes, and safe houses—the whole sealed off with a watertight compartmentalization for the obvious reason of security. All over Europe Gehlen agents masqueraded as businessmen, tax advisers, and employ-

escapes recruited in the sprawling refugee camps of Austria and Germany—for a flat price of \$100 a day, plus a fluctuating bonus afterwards if they managed to get back out safely. Among the notable successes were the penetration of East Germany's government and early warnings on Soviet jet and missile development; on uprisings in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary; on important political vibrations in Moscow; on Soviet troop strength, and even on the hostility between Russia and China. According to people who ought to know, The Org supplied upwards of 70 per cent of the intelligence data from the Soviet orbit for the United States, NATO, and SHAPE. Under the circumstances an East German newspaper was moved to offer an improbable tribute in the summer of 1953: "The Gehlen Organization has hitherto scored certain successes in the recruitment of agents in the German Democratic Republic."

In 1956 the apparatus, except for some ex-SS and ex-Nazi personnel who were phased out for political reasons, became the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*

Robert G. Deindorfer has written three books on the subject of intelligence, the most recent of which is *Secret Service: Thirty-three Centuries of Espionage*.

P-Deindorfer, Robert  
Gehlen, Reinhard  
Gehlen: Spy -  
The General War  
... a S P M  
-The Service  
-Gehlen: Master  
Spy of the  
Century

P-Cookridge, E.H.  
P-Höhne, Heinz  
P-Irving, David  
et al. - Germ. W.

Originals  
Deindorfer

continued